

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, the specification is amended and claims 1, 15, 25, 28 and 29 are amended. Reconsideration based on the above amendments and following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicant greatly appreciates that the Office Action indicates that claims 5, 6, 19 and 20 contain allowable subject matter.

Applicant also gratefully appreciates the courtesy extended to Applicant's representative during the March 22 personal interview with Examiner Lee. The points discussed during the personal interview are reemphasized in this Amendment.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-4, 7-9, 15-18, 21-23 and 29 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Don Michael (U.S. Patent No. 5,971,936). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

In particular, Applicant asserts that Don Michael does not disclose or suggest a method of processing an auscultation signal, the method including at least processing the auscultation signal to reduce a duration time of each signal segment such that the duration time of substantially all of the signal segments is less than the limit of 50 ms, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claims 15 and 29.

Specifically, Don Michael discloses a method and apparatus for audibly reproducing a heartbeat. The method derives patterns that are distinguishable and classifiable by analyzing clusters and subclusters. See col. 8, line 40-col. 9, line 55. However, nowhere in Don Michael is it disclosed or suggested that a method, for example, "stretches" a signal in time by reducing the duration time of the signal while preserving spectral content in order to facilitate an analysis of the signal. Accordingly, Don Michael fails to disclose or suggest a method that processes a signal to reduce a duration time of each signal segment such that the duration time of substantially all of the signal segments is less than the limit of 50 ms.

Because Don Michael fails to disclose each and every feature as the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) be withdrawn.

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 4, 8-15, 18 and 22-28 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Katz (U.S. Patent No. 4,528,689). The Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

In particular, Applicant asserts that Katz does not disclose or suggest a method of processing an auscultation signal, the method including at least processing the auscultation signal to reduce the duration time of each signal segment such that the duration of time of substantially all of the signal segments is less than a limit of 50 ms, and such that echo perception is reduced from the auscultation signal, as recited in independent claim 1, and similarly recited in independent claims 15 and 29.

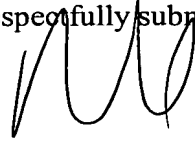
Specifically, Katz discloses a method and apparatus that provides a slowed down version of an original sound, e.g., a heartbeat without changing the quality of the sound as perceived by a trained listener such as a physician. See Abstract. However, because the acoustic signal perceived by the physician in Katz has the same pitch, tone but lower quality than an original sound, Katz fails to process the auscultation signal such that the echo perception is reduced from the auscultation signal in order to improve the quality of the processed signal. See col. 3, lines 1-4 of Katz.

Accordingly, because Katz fails to disclose each and every feature as the claimed invention, Applicant respectfully requests that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant asserts that claims 1-29 define patentable subject matter. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-29 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further is desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact Applicant's attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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